

Family Empowerment Scholarship for Unique Abilities (FES-UA) Open House

January 18, 2024



Scholarship Updates & Reminders

More Ways to Receive Reimbursements

Using the FES-UA Handbook

Frequently Asked Questions

Please note: We do not have the Q&A option available; but you can submit questions in the post-webinar survey.



Scholarship Updates & Reminders



Scholarship Updates



Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities



Dear Parent/Guardian,

Florida state law now requires Scholarship Funding Organizations (SFOs), including Step Up For Students, to collaborate to prepare agreed-upon purchasing guidelines for authorized uses of scholarship funds by December 31, 2023, and to update the guidelines at least annually.

The Agreed-Upon Purchasing Guidelines, found here, contain general guidelines.

As a Step Up family, we encourage you to also review the following resources as they contain more detail on policies and procedures related to scholarship spending through Step Up:

- Step Up's FES-UA Purchasing Guide*
- FES-UA Handbook*

*Please note: You will notice some changes in the agreed-upon purchasing guidelines, for example, the new inclusion of maintenance for musical instruments

Subject: FES-UA Purchasing Guidelines Sent: 12.30.23



FES-UA AUP Purchasing Guide

Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities



This message does not apply to FES-UA renewal students at this time.*

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are pleased to announce that Step Up For Students families may <u>NOW</u> choose how they would like to be reimbursed.

Families may choose from these three options:

- Direct Bank Transfer: Securely deposit funds directly into your bank account via an ACH transfer.
- Check: Have a physical check mailed to your provided address.
- PayPal: Opt for PayPal, a widely used and trusted online payment platform.

Important details:

- *Until further notice, FES-UA renewal students will continue to use the legacy system.
- For all other ESA students**, a payment method must be selected to continue submitting reimbursement requests. If your family is only using your student's scholarship for tuition and fees paid directly to an eligible

Subject: AVAILABLE NOW: More ways to be reimbursed! Sent: 1.9.24

NEW MyScholarShop VENDORS





MyScholarShop New Vendors

P I P E R	Piper was created in 2014 with a simple vision: to create experiences around learning with technology that are hands-on, effective, and fun. Piper is committed to providing quality STEAM educational opportunities to students around the globe.	https://www.playpiper.com/
년 LuminousMinds	Luminous Minds offers premium reading comprehension Phonics & Sight Word worksheets for parents and teachers, making early learning accessible for all.	https://www.luminousmind sinc.com/
ESTD. 2020 LEAF'D BOX ^{IM} GARDENING REIMAGINED	Pick your garden, grow your plants and enjoy your harvest. Their gardens come delivered with 30 plants and with the experience of your choosing. There are Basic and Advanced experiences.	https://leafdbox.com/
EXPLORATION EDUCATION	Exploration Education focuses on project based learning that makes it enjoyable for students to learn and easy for the parent or teacher to implement.	https://explorationeducatio n.com/



FES-UA Parent/Guardian Handbook

FAMILY EMPOWERMENT SCHOLARSHIP FOR STUDENTS WITH UNIQUE ABILITIES PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

FES- UA Parent/Guardian Handbook



The FES-UA parent handbook serves as a guide on how to utilize your scholarship funds.

Over the next few slides, we will show you where to find answers to some of the most frequently asked questions we get about the FES-UA scholarship.

Current (2023-2024 School Year) Award Amounts

• For a student who has a Level I to Level III matrix of services (matrix score 251–253) or a diagnosis by a licensed physician, an Autonomous Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) or a psychologist, the calculated scholarship amount for a student participating in the program must be based upon the grade level and school district in which the student would have been enrolled.

• For a student with a Level IV or Level V matrix of services (matrix score 254 or 255), the calculated scholarship amount must be based upon the school district to which the student would have been assigned as the total funds per full-time equivalent for the Level IV or Level V exceptional student education program.

• Please note that the student Award Details in the EMA portal may reflect the students 2023-24 formula award amounts; however, this does not affect any grandfathered award amounts from the 2020-2021 school year.



Refer to page 6 of the Parent Handbook



FAMILY EMPOWERMENT SCHOLARSHIP FOR STUDENTS WITH UNIQUE ABILITIES

Basic Scholarship Amounts for 2023-24

Students with a Level 1, 2 or 3 matrix of services OR those with diagnosis by a physician or psychologist will be awarded at the Matrix Level 251-253 indicated below.

For a student who received a scholarship in the 2020-21 school year, the amount of the award will be the greater of the amount calculated below or the amount the student received for the 2020-21 school year.

Note: The county is the one the student lives in according to their 2023-24 scholarship application.

District	Le	ESE vels 1-3 (251-25	53)	ESE	ESE	Die
District	3 & 4 Years Grades K-3	Grades 4-8	Grades 9-12	(254)	(255)	UIS
Alachua	\$9,866	\$9,239	\$9,177	\$21,196	\$31,480	La
Baker	\$10,438	\$9,793	\$9,730	\$22,136	\$32,704	L
Bay	\$9,954	\$9,327	\$9,265	\$21,284	\$31,568	Le
Bradford	\$10,526	\$9,881	\$9,818	\$22,224	\$32,792	Le
Brevard	\$9,922	\$9,295	\$9,233	\$21,252	\$31,536	Lib
Broward	\$10,205	\$9,563	\$9,500	\$21,659	\$32,182	Mac
Calhoun	\$10,756	\$10,111	\$10,048	\$22,454	\$33,022	Mar
Charlotte	\$10,306	\$9,679	\$9,617	\$21,636	\$31,920	Ma
Citrus	\$10,573	\$9,946	\$9,884	\$21,176	\$31,460	Ma
Clay	\$9,876	\$9,249	\$9,187	\$21,206	\$31,490	Mo
Collier	\$12,263	\$11,604	\$11,539	\$23,507	\$34,311	Na
Columbia	\$10,389	\$9,744	\$9,681	\$21,790	\$32,358	Oka
Dade	\$10,130	\$9,491	\$9,428	\$21,703	\$32,175	Okeed
De Soto	\$11,109	\$10,464	\$10,401	\$22,103	\$32,671	Ora
Dixie	\$10,513	\$9,868	\$9,805	\$22,211	\$32,779	Osc

District	Le	ESE vels 1-3 (251-2	53)	ESE	ESE Lovel E
District	3 & 4 Years Grades K-3	Grades 4-8	Grades 9-12	(254)	(255)
Lake	\$9,929	\$9,302	\$9,240	\$21,158	\$31,442
Lee	\$10,958	\$10,323	\$10,260	\$21,810	\$32,219
Leon	\$10,543	\$9,916	\$9,854	\$21,251	\$31,535
Levy	\$10,562	\$9,917	\$9,854	\$22,260	\$32,828
Liberty	\$10,914	\$10,269	\$10,206	\$22,612	\$33,180
Madison	\$10,758	\$10,113	\$10,050	\$22,096	\$32,664
Manatee	\$10,123	\$9,496	\$9,434	\$21,332	\$31,616
Marion	\$9,881	\$9,254	\$9,192	\$21,178	\$31,462
Martin	\$10,568	\$9,933	\$9,870	\$21,963	\$32,374
Monroe	\$13,174	\$12,518	\$12,453	\$25,119	\$35,879
Nassau	\$10,207	\$9,580	\$9,518	\$21,537	\$31,821
Okaloosa	\$10,324	\$9,697	\$9,635	\$21,341	\$31,625
Okeechobee	\$10,224	\$9,579	\$9,516	\$21,922	\$32,490
Orange	\$9,976	\$9,343	\$9,281	\$21,431	\$31,812
Osceola	\$9,976	\$9.349	\$9,287	\$21,212	\$31,496



Revise Matrix of Services

A parent/guardian of a student with a disability who does not have an IEP or who would like a reevaluation of an existing IEP may choose to request an IEP meeting and evaluation from the school district to obtain or revise a matrix of services. After the district completes the matrix, the amount of the scholarship payment will be adjusted up or down based on the revised level of services.

Please note: An initial IEP evaluation may be requested by a parent/guardian at any time from their school district, and subsequently, an IEP re-evaluation is available every three years.

To seek an evaluation or re-evaluation from the student's school district:

- Contact your local school district to schedule the evaluation and/or matrix review. The school district is required to complete the IEP and matrix of services within 30 days after receiving notice of the parent's/guardian's request.
- The school district will complete the evaluation and matrix review and notify the parent/guardian and the DOE of the student's updated matrix level within 10 calendar days after its completion.
- The DOE will send a notification to Step Up For Students and the parent/guardian within 10 days after receiving the school district's notification of the matrix level.
- Step Up For Students will update the matrix level on the student's account.

Please note: The Florida Department of Education will communicate to Step Up For Students the updated funding amount, Step Up does not determine matrix or funding amounts.

Refer to p. 6 of the Parent Handbook



Funding Continuation

Once funds are deposited into the student's account, parents/guardians may use the scholarship funds for a variety of services. Any unused funds will be rolled over for utilization in subsequent school years, assuming the student remains eligible for Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA).

Funding to the account will continue each year, based on the annual application submission, and agreement to comply with the Sworn Compliance Statement. Once the student graduates from high school or attains 22 years of age on or before July 1 (whichever comes first), no additional funds will be deposited into the student's account, but they may continue to use the funds in the accounts.

If during the school year the Florida Department of Education finds a student in a Florida public school, or any education program funded by the state, or if the parent/guardian withdraws the student from the scholarship program, funds received for that school year will be returned to the state.

Please note: A student is ineligible for additional scholarship payments if the student's account has been inactive (no spending activity) for two (2) consecutive fiscal years (July 1- June 30) or has an account balance of \$50,000 or more.

Refer to p. 9 of the Parent Handbook



Continuing Program Eligibility Scholarship Renewal

Students must complete a renewal application each school year in order to receive additional funding and remain active in the FES-UA program. Students do not have to requalify each year, with the exception of students who have aged out of a High-Risk diagnosis, or some hospital/homebound students.

Students who do not renew and receive FES-UA funding and "sit out" a year will lose renewal status and priority.

Students who leave the FES-UA program and who choose to later reapply for an FES-UA Scholarship will be considered new students.

If your student turns 22 or graduates high school, but still has funds remaining, you MUST complete an intentto-continue and provide the required documentation to use the remaining funds.

Continuing Program Eligibility cont...

Step Up For Students MUST be notified immediately if your scholarship student enrolls in one of the options listed below, or if you move out of state. Failure to do so could result in a loss of funding, loss of future eligibility, or financial or criminal penalties.

- Public school or any public-school classes (including Charter Schools)
- Services funded through the Florida Education Finance Program
- Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)
- Florida Virtual School as a public-school student, not as a scholarship, private student
- Florida Tax Credit Scholarship program, including PEP (FTC/FTC-PEP)
- Hope Scholarship program
- Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options (FES-EO)
- New Worlds Scholarship Account

If your scholarship student is placed in any residential program, it is important that you ask about the mandatory school attendance requirement while the student is in the program. If the program uses any Florida public school option (district school, charter school, Florida Virtual School), the student's scholarship will be in jeopardy. If the program uses a private school option, and if the private school is an eligible, participating private school, your student's scholarship funds may be available to cover the cost of tuition and fees while the student is attending.



pay,

Refer to p. 29-30 of the Parent Handbook



More Ways to Receive Reimbursements

Choose How to Receive Payment for Approved Reimbursements

Important Notice

We are pleased to announce improvements to our reimbursement services for Step Up's ESA scholarship families. This new process can be managed within the family's EMA account and will replace the U.S. Bank Focus/Reimbursement Cards.

Families submitting reimbursement requests in EMA must select a payment method before submitting a new request. *Note: This step should only be completed if you intend to submit reimbursement requests.*

Renewal FES-UA students are not impacted at this time and will continue to use the legacy system until further notice.

Payment Method Options

Families with an approved reimbursement request can now select from one of the following payment methods:



Direct Bank Transfer: Securely deposit funds directly into your bank account via an ACH transfer.

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Check: For a more traditional approach, you can select a physical check for your reimbursement payment method. The check will be mailed to your provided address.



PayPal: Opt for PayPal, a widely used and trusted online payment platform, to receive your reimbursement with ease.





Username	Forgot Username?
Password	Forgot Password?
	Show

Keep me signed in



Don't have an account? Sign Up

SUFS Team Member? Sign In

Log in to your EMA account.

Dashboard				
~	Your Student's Learning Plan	My Applicatio	ons	
S+ Reimbursements	The Studient Learning Plan must be completed annually by families using the Personalized Education Program (PEP) scholamship. It is optional for all other families. The Studient Learning Plan is a personalized learning alian to help you	NEW WORLDS READY	NI SCHILARDAR	VIDE ALLS
P My Students	and your child decide what learning priorities to focus on and how to best, spend your child's scholarship dollars. It provides ideas and links to	School Year	Student Name	Status
P Marketplace	instructional resources to help your child.	2022 - 2023		Draft
2352 552	GET STARTED	2022 - 2023		Submitted
 Recent Transactions 		2022 - 2023		Pending
9) Helo		2022 - 2023		On Huld
	My Students	2021 - 2022		Complete
	Available Scholarships			
	IMPORTANT NOTICE You can only subwit one application are program for EES-10.8 ETC as	VIEES.ED Plante make	see all students have	a house added to the
	"My Charleste" section on the left before program for PES-UN & PTC at	ly" select all students vo	a want to apply for ne	w and renewing

Click on the person icon on the top right corner of the dashboard and then click "Edit Profile."

Scroll down to the "Payment Method" section on your profile and click the "Manage" button. This information must be kept up to date and can be updated at any time, however, the address should not be altered and must match the information in your guardian profile.

Payment N	Method
Families subm provide any ap updated at an completed if y	nitting reimbursement requests for students with available funds must select how they would like to receive payment and pplicable information. This is done by clicking the "Manage" button below. This information must be kept up to date and can be by time. Note: The "Manage" button becomes available once you have at least one funded student. This step should only be you intend to submit reimbursement requests.
MANAGE	A Payment Method Needs Attention

Note: The "Manage" button becomes available after the profile is saved for the first time.

- Once you click "Manage," you'll be brought to the payment method screen.
- Your address information will be pre-populated from your EMA profile.
 - DO NOT EDIT YOUR ADDRESS HERE.
 - If you need to change your address, please do so in your EMA parent profile then return to the Payment Method screen.
- Click "Next" to continue to select a payment method.

Payment Method	d
Please select how you would like to receive payment for approved reimb details are accurate before submitting. This information must be kept up help keep your information secure, your banking information	bursements for your family. Please ensure all to date and can be updated at any time. To is not stored in EMA. <u>click here</u> .
Please update your banking information to proceed.	
1 2 3	Powered by tipatti
Address Payment Method Done	
Enter Your Information	

Disco colort how you would """ to acco	Payment Method	×
details are accurate before submitting. T help keep your information su	his information must be kept up to date and car ecure, your banking information is not stored in	n be updated at any time. To EMA. <u>click here</u> .
1 2 Address Payment Method	3 Done	Powered by tpatti
Payment Method:	Direct Deposit / ACH	-
Name on Account Bank Name	test twohundred	
Routing Code	Required field	
Account Number Account Type	Required field Checking O Savings	

Please note: To help keep your information secure, your banking information is not stored in EMA.

Next, select how you would like to receive payment for approved reimbursements. You can choose from: Direct Bank Transfer, Check or PayPal.

The fields will vary based on the **Payment Method** selection.

Please ensure all details are accurate before submitting.

Payment Options

Direct Deposit: Once a reimbursement request is approved, Step Up will initiate the transfer of funds which will be electronically transferred into the families' bank account two business days later. This option requires a bank account and is convenient for families who prefer an automated process.

Mailed Check: A check will be mailed roughly one week after the reimbursement request is approved by Step Up. This option may be preferred by those who are more comfortable with traditional transactions and/or families who do not have a bank account.

PayPal: Transactions often occur in real-time or within a few hours. However, it may take additional time to transfer funds from a PayPal account to a bank account or a credit/debit card. PayPal is also widely accepted on various websites, and it allows for quick peer-to-peer transfers.

		X
	Payment Method	
Please select how you would like to receive details are accurate before submitting. This help keep your information secu	payment for approved reimbursements for your family. Please ensure information must be kept up to date and can be updated at any time. re, your banking information is not stored in EMA. <u>click here</u> .	e all To
Address Payment Method	Powerd by tpatt Done	
Payment Method:	Direct Deposit / ACH	
Name on Account	test twohundred	
Bank Name	Required field	
Routing Code 🤁	Required field	
Account Number	Required field	
Account Type	Checking O Savings	

😟 EMA	Scholarship Portal
Education Market Assistant	
Dashboard	
\$+ Reimbursements	Payment Method
স্থৃ My Students	provide any applicable information. This is done by clicking the "Manage" button below. This information must be kept up to date and can be updated at any time. Note: The "Manage" button becomes available once you have at least one funded student. This step should only be
m Marketplace	MANAGE Symmetry Payment Method Connected
 Recent Transactions 	
(?) Help	Manage Consents

When the green message "Payment Method Connected" displays, you are good to go!

Please note: It may take up to 12 hours for this change to be reflected in your EMA account. If you continue to see the "Payment Method Needs Attention" message after updating your payment method, please log out, open a new window and log back in.

Not Ready to Update Right Now?

To continue submitting reimbursement requests within EMA, you will need to select a payment method.

If you do not update this information in your profile today, you will be reminded on various screens in EMA before you can submit a reimbursement.

99 p				
55 Dashboard	Your Student's Learning Plan	My Applicatio	ns	
\$4 Reimbursements	The Student Learning Plan must be completed annually by families using the Personalized Education Program (PEP) scholarship, it is optional for all other			1000000
🎯 My Students	families. The Student Learning Plan is a personalized learning plan to help you and your child decide what learning priorities to focus on and how to best creating children conductive duration. In exceeding block and links to be	School Year	Student Name	Status
Marketplace	instructional resources to help your child.	2022 - 2023		Draft
		2022 - 2023		Submitted
③ Recent Transactions	GET STARTED	2022 - 2023		Pending
		2022 - 2023		Qn Hold
() Help	My Students	2021 - 2022		Complete
	Available Scholarships			
	IMPORTANT NOTICE You can only submit one application per program for FES-UA & FTC a "My Students" section on the left before applying. After you click "App students.	nd FES-EO. Please make ily* select all students yo	sure all students hav u want to apply for ne	e been added to the w and renewing

Another way you'll be prompted to update your Payment Method is when you click on the "Reimbursements" tab on the left panel on the dashboard.



If you HAVE submitted a reimbursement previously and have NOT already selected your payment method, a window will appear asking you to update your payment method information. Again, this change is required to continue submitting reimbursements.

Note: If you bypass this popup, you will see another reminder on the Reimbursements page.

Click the "Update" button to complete this step now or update it later within your profile.

😨 EMA	Scholarship Portal
Education Market Assistant	
Dashboard	Reimbursements
+ Reimbursements	
🎯 My Students	Congratulations! You are almost ready to begin submitting a reimbursement request for your student. Families submitting reimbursement requests must choose how they would like to receive payment for approved reimbursements before submitting a request. Please select your payment method within your profile. Note: This step should only be completed if you intend to submit reimbursement
Marketplace	requests.
	1 Setup your payment method information within your <u>profile</u> .
Recent Transactions	2 Once your payment method information is updated, you may return to the "Reimbursements" tab to submit a reimbursement request.
?) Help	UPDATE PROFILE

If you HAVE NOT submitted a reimbursement previously AND have a funded student, you will see a message on the "Reimbursements" screen prompting you to select your payment method on your profile.

Click the "Update Profile" button to complete this step now or update it later within your profile.



English Video

We are pleased to announce improvements to our reimbursement services for Step Up's ESA scholarship families. This new process can be managed within the family's EMA account and will replace the U.S. Bank Focus Cards. This video covers how families may submit reimbursements in EMA by selecting a payment method before submitting new requests. This step should only be completed if you intend to submit reimbursement requests. Note: FES-UA renewal families are NOT impacted at this time and will continue to use the legacy system until further notice.

RESOURCES ~~~



Spanish Video

Nos complace anunciar mejoras en nuestros servicios de reembolso para las familias de beca de la ESA de Step Up. Este nuevo proceso se puede administrar dentro de la cuenta EMA de la familia y sustituirá a las Tarjetas Focus de U.S. Bank. Este video cubre cómo las familias pueden presentar reembolsos en EMA seleccionando un método de pago antes de presentar nuevas solicitudes. Este paso sólo debe completarse si tiene intención de enviar solicitudes de reembolso.

Nota: Las familias de renovación de FES-UA NO se verán afectadas en este momento y continuarán utilizando el sistema anterior hasta nuevo aviso.

Managing Funds Already On Your Reimbursement Card

This slide only pertains to families with a balance on their U.S. Bank Focus Card. They can:

Continue to use those funds until they run out.

• Families can use the card like any other debit card to make purchases or get cash.

Withdraw them at a bank.

• Cardholders can make a cash withdrawal from a network of ATMs.

Call U.S. Bank and request a check for the balance that remains on the card.

• Families can call the number on the back of their card (888-863-0681) to request to withdraw their funds. They should be prepared to verify their address on this call.

New reimbursement funds will not be added to the U.S. Bank Focus Card starting <u>January 8, 2024</u>, if you need assistance with your U.S. Bank Focus Card, call (888) 863-0681.







December Open House

October Open House

November Open House

DID YOU MISS AN FES-UA OPEN HOUSE?

NOT TO WORRY, WE HAVE THE RECORDINGS HERE FOR YOUR REVIEW.

Our 🛃 YouT	ube Chann	el!		
			SUBSCR	IBE
HOME VIDEOS	SHORTS	ISTS COMMUNITY	CHANNELS ABO	ut Q >
<section-header></section-header>	Statistick And Statistick And	<section-header><section-header><section-header><section-header><section-header></section-header></section-header></section-header></section-header></section-header>		Step Up Parent
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Three new exciting YouTube Videos!



Navigating MyScholarShop in EMA



How to Reset Your Password in EMA and Legacy



Finding Providers & Services in the EMA Marketplace for Parents



It's Q & A Time!

It's Q & A Time!

Are siblings of an FES-UA student automatically eligible as well? What scholarship options are available for siblings of students with FES-UA Scholarship?

No, siblings will not automatically qualify if the other child is a recipient of the FES-UA Scholarship. With the passing of HB1, all students that are eligible for K-12 Florida public school, regardless of income, are eligible to receive the FTC (Florida Tax Credit) Scholarship or the FES-EO (Florida Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options) Scholarship.

Will the scholarship be considered as income for tax purposes?

No, the Florida scholarships are not considered income.

If my child remains in public school, can I still use my FES-UA scholarship to pay for his speech therapy, occupational therapy, or tutoring?

A child who is enrolled in public school and reported to the state in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) <u>cannot</u> use the FES-UA scholarship. This includes Charter schools, as well as FLVS Full-Time, since they are funded through the FEFP. However, if an account has rollover funds from a previous scholarship year and the student enrolls in public school, the parent/guardian can continue using funds for eligible expenses. No additional funds will be added to the account. The account will be closed if there is inactivity for 2 consecutive years.

It's Q & A Time!

What happens to unspent money from my child's FES-UA account?

FES-UA funds that are unused in your child's FES-UA educational savings account may be left in the account and rolled over to the following year. You must apply as a renewal or continuing student to be able to access those funds the next year. Note: An inactive account for 2 consecutive years will be closed, and funds returned to the state.

We received a voucher for VPK Preschool, is there a way to discontinue that and use the FES-UA Scholarship?

A child cannot use FES-UA and a VPK voucher in the same year. If your preschooler has been awarded an FES-UA scholarship, do not provide a VPK voucher to your child's school. If you have already done so, please advise the school that you would like to have the voucher withdrawn. You may also contact your Early Learning Coalition for more assistance.

Does my FES-UA student have to attend a participating private school to be funded?

No, an FES-UA student may also homeschool and still be funded; however, tuition and fees can only be reimbursed at an eligible participating private school.

Contact Us

Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET



Call: 877-735-7837



Chat: www.stepupforstudents.org





Thank you for attending our webinar **Upcoming Webinar** February 15, 2024



See you next time!